Welfare Schemes for Brick Kiln Workers

3807. SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATKAMAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the welfare schemes introduced for brick kiln labourers ; and

(b) what is proposed about the cem-ptilsory Insurance against the risk in their work or work spot ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR) : (a) There are no separate welfare schemes for brick kiln labourers. However, they get sufficient protection under the Labour Laws.

(b) No proposal for a compulsory Insurance Scheme for these workers is under consideration of the Government.

Augmenting the supply of essential commodities through imports

3808. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some National Level of political parties have urged Government to augment the supply of essential commodities through imports to ease the pressure of rising prices ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) and (b) Imports of essential commodities is made from time to time considering various relevant factors like internal availability and foreign exchange resources etc.

Committee for the welfare of Minorities

3809. SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL alias MEEM AFZAL: willth'PRIME MINISTER be pleased to states :

(a) whether there is any Committee in the Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution for monitoring the implementation of the 15-point Programme for the Welfare of the Minorities ; and

(b) if so, the details of such Commi-tees and its achievements during the last bree years under the programme ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMULUDDIN AHMED) : (a) NO, Sir.

(b) Does not arise

Curtailment of Imports of Edible Oils

3810. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are proposing to curtail drastically the imports of edible oils;

(b) whether such curtailment in import is likely to lead to rise in prices of edible oil in the country; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to stabilise the prices of edible oils?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) The requirement to import edible oils is constantly reviewed and imports mgde as and when required considering local availability foreign exchange availability with due regard to encouraging indigenous producers of oilseeds to get their remunerative prices.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The Govt, have taken the following steps:

1. Stock limits of oilseeds and oils by dealers/processors and manufacturers of edible oils/vsanspati have been reduced.

2. Import of edible oils has been made to supplement the indigenous production.

3. For augmenting the availability and acceptability of edible oils, bknclji g of any two edible vegetable oils like groundnut oil, mustard oil, soyabesn oil, cotton seed oil, sunflower oil etc., has been per-mit'ed.

4. Central Government has directed all State Governments/UTs to have strict sureveilance on the availability an*d* price of edible oils and also to undertake de-hoirdirsg operations.

5. Edible oils have once again been exempted from the railway freight increase proposed in Railway Budget for 1992-93.

6. Vegeitble oils have continued to remain exempted from the levy of excise duty altogether.

7. *The* interest on cash credit has re cently been lowered by 10% point.

[3811 *Transferred to the 27 March, 1992]*

Distribution of tea and Janata toilet soap through P.D.S.

3812. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have deci ded to distribute tea at a cheap rate and Janata toilet soap throrgh Public Distribution System; and

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have also de cided to entrust more items to the Na tional Cooperative Consumers Federa tion of India (NCCF) such as pulses, note-books, matchboxes washing soap, etc., to feed the PDS,; and

(d) if so, by when the schem; will be put into operation; and if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (d) The Central Government is at present responsible for the procurement, storage and transportation of key essential commodities viz wheat, rice levy sugar, imported edible oils, kerosene and soft coke; the State Government and U.T. Administration have been advised to include additional items of mass consupmtion according to local preferences for distribution to the consumers using the PDS outlets. Central Government has reiterated the same in the context of implementation of Revamped Public Distribution System in about 1700 identified blocks. In these areas, the State Government/ U.T. Administration have been requested to include trems like pulses (gram), tea, soaps and iodised salt for distribution using PDS outlets. They have been advised to indicate their requirements of additional commodities to the National level organisations, namely, National Agriculiural Cooperative marketing Federation (NAFED), National Consumer Cooperative Federation (NCCF), Tea Baard etc., to facilitate centralised pro ourement by these organisations to the extent possible. Some Stole Government have undertaken distribution which is an ongaing process.

Making the Coananer Protection Aet effective and pnrposeM

3813. SHRI AJIT P.K.JOGI: KUMARIALIA: SHRI N.E. BALARAM:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(i) whether Government have constituted a high power Working Group to examine the suggestions for making the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 more effective and purposeful;

(b) if so, the date of constitution and the composition of the group;

(c) the terms of reference of the group; and

(d) the time-bound programme to obtain, examine and implement the recommendations of the group by Government ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c) Central Government constituted a high power Working Group on 7-1-1991 under the Chairmanship of Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, West Bengal. Other Members include State Food Minister from Tamil Nadu, Members of Parliament, representatives of Central Government Departments/Offices, trade and industry and voluntary consumer organisations.

The Working Group was to suggest suitable amendments to make the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and MRTP Act 1969 more effective. Initially the Working Group was to submit its report within 4 months which was further extended upto 6-1-1992.

(d) The Working Group has since submitted its report which will be discussed in the forthcoming meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council which will make suitable recommendations in the matter. Thereafter the views of Ministry of Law and other concerned Ministries/Departments will be taken. Thereafter approval of Cabinet has to be obtained before introducing the Bill in the Parliament.